



4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; American Overseas Research
Centers Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of
Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is
issuing a notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY)
2020 for the American Overseas Research Centers (AORC)
program, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)
number 84.274A. This notice relates to the approved
information collection under OMB control number 1894-0006.

DATES:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE
FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 45
DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 105
DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Pre-Application Webinar Information: The Department will
hold a pre-application meeting via webinar for prospective
applicants. Detailed information regarding the webinar

will be provided on the website for the AORC program at www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpsaorc/index.html.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg.FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cheryl E. Gibbs, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room 257-09, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 453-5690. Email: cheryl.gibbs@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The AORC program provides grants to consortia of United States institutions of higher education (IHEs) to establish or operate overseas centers to promote postgraduate research, exchanges, and area studies. AORC

grants may be used to pay all or a portion of the costs for the operation and maintenance of overseas facilities; organizing and managing conferences; teaching and research materials; the acquisition, maintenance, and preservation of library collections; bringing visiting scholars and faculty to the center to teach or to conduct research; faculty and staff stipends and salaries; faculty, staff, and student travel; and publication and dissemination of materials for the scholarly and general public.

Priorities: Under this competition we are particularly interested in applications that address the following priorities.

Invitational Priorities: For FY 2020 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are invitational priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1), we do not give an application that meets these invitational priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

These priorities are:

Invitational Priority 1--Professional Development Opportunities for Community Colleges and Minority Serving Institutions.

Provide professional development opportunities to participants from community colleges and minority-serving institutions. The opportunities must include: foreign language instruction at the beginning level to introduce participants to the languages of the center, or at the intermediate and advanced levels to strengthen participants' foreign language proficiency; curriculum development workshops for incorporating global content into courses; and conferences related to the scholarly focus of the center. The professional development opportunities may be provided in the United States or overseas where the center is located.

For the purpose of this priority:

Community college means an institution that meets the definition in section 312(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1058(f)); or an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the HEA) that awards degrees and certificates, more than 50 percent of which are not bachelor's degrees (or an equivalent) or master's, professional, or other advanced degrees.

Minority-serving institution means an institution that is eligible to receive assistance under sections 316

through 320 of part A of title III, under part B of title III, or under title V of the HEA.

Note: The list of institutions currently designated as eligible under title III and title V is available at: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idades/eligibility.html#el-inst.

Invitational Priority 2--Open Access to Center-related Research, Instructional, and Scholarly Resources.

Projects that promote international scholarship by providing open access to center-related research studies, conference proceedings, online libraries, digital archives, foreign language instructional materials, scholarly publications, and other resources related to the thematic focus of the center.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1128a.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit

Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to IHEs only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Available Funds: \$1,000,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2021 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$46,000-\$70,000 for each 12-month budget period.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$58,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 17.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Consortia of United States IHEs that receive more than 50 percent of their funding from public or private United States sources, have a

permanent presence in the country in which the center is located, and are organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, which are exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

3. Subgrantees: A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/v/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

2. Submission of Proprietary Information: Given the types of projects that may be proposed in applications for the AORC grant competition, your application may include business information that you consider proprietary. In 34 CFR 5.11 we define "business information" and describe the

process we use in determining whether any of that information is proprietary and, thus, protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended). Because we plan to post on our website a selection of FY 2020 AORC funded abstracts and applications' narrative sections, you may wish to request confidentiality of business information.

Consistent with Executive Order 12600, please designate in your application any information that you believe is exempt from disclosure under Exemption 4. In the appropriate Appendix section of your application, under "Other Attachments Form," please list the page number or numbers on which we can find this information. For additional information please see 34 CFR 5.11(c).

3. Intergovernmental Review: This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

4. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

5. Recommended Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate the application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 30 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, except titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, Application for Federal Assistance cover sheet (SF 424); the Supplemental Information Form SF 424B; Part II, ED 524 (Summary Budget A) and the detailed budget justification (Summary Budget C); or Part IV, assurances and certifications. The recommended page limit also does not apply to the project abstract, curriculum vitae, or letters

of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to the entire application narrative.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from section 609 of the HEA and 34 CFR 75.210. The maximum score for all selection criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(a) Program purpose (up to 20 points).

The Secretary reviews each application to determine the extent to which the proposed project promotes postgraduate research, exchanges, and area studies.

(b) Need for project (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(c) Quality of the project design (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(ii) The extent to which fellowship recipients or other project participants are to be selected on the basis of academic excellence.

(d) Quality of project services (up to 20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services.

(e) Quality of project personnel (up to 15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(ii) The extent to which time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

(f) Adequacy of resources (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.

(ii) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

(g) Quality of the project evaluation (up to 15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the context within which the project operates.

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide timely guidance for quality assurance.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance

of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

All applications submitted to the FY 2020 AORC competition will be evaluated and scored by peer reviewers who are subject matter experts in area studies, international studies, and world languages. The Department will develop a rank order slate of all applicants in the competition, from the highest score to the lowest score. Applications selected for funding will be determined by the applicant's rank order in the competition.

3. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this program the Department conducts a review of the risks

posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose specific conditions and, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

4. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify the U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of the GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations

section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates the approved application as part of the binding commitments under the grant.

3. Open Licensing Requirements: Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee or subgrantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place

the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c).

AORC program grantees are required to submit their performance reports into the web-based International Resource Information System (IRIS) data reporting system. For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

5. Performance Measures: The purpose of the AORC program is to promote area studies, exchanges, and postgraduate research. In compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Department will

use the following measures to assess the impact of the AORC program on project participants and researchers:

AORC Performance Measure 1: The number of individuals conducting postgraduate research utilizing the services of title VI AORCs.

AORC Performance Measure 2: The percentage of AORC program participants who advanced in their professional field within two years after their participation.

The grantee performance reports collected in IRIS will be the data source for these measures. The AORC program reporting screens may be viewed at:

<http://iris.ed.gov/iris/pdfs/AORC.pdf>.

6. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance

with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the *Federal Register*. You may access the official edition of the *Federal Register* and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the *Federal Register*, in text or PDF. To use PDF, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the *Federal Register* by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

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[FR Doc. 2020-02651 Filed: 2/10/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 2/11/2020]